

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): An apparatus for anonymizing medical data comprising:

~~a first~~ at least one communications input receiving one or more patient files, each of said one or more patient files including a patient identifier;

a pair list database storing a plurality of related pair identifiers, each of said plurality of related pair identifiers including one of said patient identifiers and an associated anonymous identifier;

a pair list retriever to search said pair list database to find a first associated anonymous identifier paired with a first patient identifier;

a pair list generator to create a new associated anonymous identifier to pair with a new patient identifier, said new associated anonymous identifier and said new patient identifier comprising a new related pair identifiers, said new related pair identifiers added to said pair list database;

an anonymous file generator creating one or more anonymous files from said one or more patient files by automatically replacing each of said patient identifiers with its said associated anonymous identifier taken from said related pair identifiers; and

an anonymous file storage element for storing said one or more anonymous files.

Claim 2 (original): An apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein each of said patient identifiers includes a patient confidential data.

Claim 3 (currently amended): An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:

a patient file development network in communication with said ~~first~~ at least one communications input, said patient file development network sending said one or more patient files to said anonymous file generator.

Claim 4 (original): An apparatus as described in claim 3, wherein said patient file development network comprises at least one image acquisition station.

Claim 5 (currently amended): An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:

at least one primary care network in communication with said ~~first~~ at least one communications input, said at least one primary care network including ~~a hospital~~ an archive system.

Claim 6 (currently amended): An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:

at least one remote ~~hospital-clinic~~ workstation storing said ~~pair-list database~~ anonymous file generator.

Claim 7 (currently amended): An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:

a research and development network in communication with said ~~an anonymous file generator~~ anonymous file storage element, said research and development network receiving said one or more anonymous files from said anonymous file storage element.

Claim 8 (original): An apparatus as described in claim 7, wherein said research and development network comprises at least one research and development workstation.

Claim 9 (original): An apparatus as described in claim 5, further comprising:

a patient file development network in communication with said at least one primary care network, said patient file development network sending said one or more patient files to said at least one primary care network.

Claim 10 (currently amended): An apparatus for anonymizing medical data comprising:

a patient file development network, said patient file development network creating one or more patient files, each of one or more patient files including a patient identifier;

a primary care network in communication with said patient file development network, said ~~at least one~~ primary care network including a ~~hospital~~ an archive system for storing said one or more patient files; and

an anonymization network ~~system~~ including a first communications input for receiving said one or more patient files from said patient file development network and a second communications input for receiving said one or more patient files from said primary

care network, said anonymization network ~~system~~ including a pair list database storing a plurality of related pair identifiers, each of said plurality of related pair identifiers including one of said patient identifiers and an associated anonymous identifier;

wherein said anonymization network ~~system~~ creates one or more anonymous files from said one or more patient files by automatically replacing each of said patient identifiers with its said associated anonymous identifier taken from said related pair identifiers; and

wherein said one or more anonymous files are stored in an anonymous file storage element.

Claim 11 (currently amended): An apparatus as described in claim 10, wherein said anonymization network ~~system~~ comprises at least one remote ~~hospital-clinic~~ workstation.

Claims 12 - 13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (currently amended): An apparatus as described in claim 10, further comprising:

a research and development network in communication with said anonymization network ~~system~~, said research and development network receiving said one or more anonymous files from said anonymization network ~~system~~.

Claim 15 (original): An apparatus as described in claim 10, further comprising:  
a pair list retriever to search said pair list database to find a first associated anonymous identifier paired with a first patient identifier.

Claim 16 (original): An apparatus as described in claim 10, further comprising:  
a pair list generator to create a new associated anonymous identifier to pair with a new patient identifier, said new associated anonymous identifier and said new patient identifier comprising a new related pair identifiers, said new related pair identifiers added to said pair list database.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A method of anonymizing medical data comprising:  
creating a patient file from a patient file development network;  
transferring said patient file from said patient file development network to a primary care network;

transferring said patient file from said primary care network to an anonymization network;

extracting a patient identifier from a said patient file;  
searching a plurality of related pair identifiers contained in a pair list database for said patient identifier;

retrieving an associated anonymous identifier paired to said patient identifier from one of said related pair identifiers;

replacing said patient identifier with said associated anonymous identifier to create an anonymous file; and

storing said anonymous file in an anonymous file storage element.

Claim 18 (original): A method as described in claim 17, further comprising:  
generating a new associated anonymous identifier to pair with said patient identifier if  
said searching a plurality of related pair identifiers fails to find said patient identifier in said  
pair list database.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method as described in claim ~~17~~ 18, further  
comprising:

appending said pair list database to include a new related pair identifiers comprising  
said new associated anonymous identifier and said patient identifier.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A method as described in claim 17, wherein said  
patient ~~files~~ file ~~are~~ is automatically received from a said primary care network.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A method as described in claim 17, wherein said  
patient file is automatically received from a said patient file development network.

Claim 22 (new): A method of anonymizing medical data comprising:  
creating a patient file from a patient file development network;  
transferring said patient file from said patient file development network to an  
anonymization network;  
extracting a patient identifier from said patient file;  
searching a plurality of related pair identifiers contained in a pair list database for said  
patient identifier;

retrieving an associated anonymous identifier paired to said patient identifier from one of said related pair identifiers;

replacing said patient identifier with said associated anonymous identifier to create an anonymous file; and

storing said anonymous file in an anonymous file storage element.